

FACT SHEET

DISCHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH SEAFOOD PROCESSING

GENERAL DISCHARGE PERMIT NO. 00SE

GENERAL NPDES PERMIT NO. MDG52

General permits are discharge permits issued for classes of discharges. These discharges are generally the result of a particular operation or treatment process and are very similar in effluent characteristics. Each general permit provides effluent limitations and conditions that the dischargers must meet, and is subject to the same enforcement actions as individual discharge permits. General permits improve the efficiency of the Maryland Department of the Environment in issuing permits to cover certain types of discharges and at the same time provide service to the regulated community by reducing the time necessary to obtain a permit.

This general permit has been developed to address a variety of wastewater discharges associated with small operations that process crabs, oysters, fish, clams, and other seafood. Both federal (40 CFR 122) and State (COMAR 26.08.04) regulations require discharge permits for most of these facilities. Specifically, State regulations require that all discharges of wastes or wastewaters regardless of volume shall be authorized by a discharge permit. This includes discharges to surface or ground waters. Federal regulations address discharges to surface waters only.

Until now, the Department has fulfilled this permitting obligation by means of individual permits. Because the discharges from most small seafood processors are similar and have been controlled by almost identical permit conditions, this class of discharge is appropriate for coverage under a general permit.

This permit authorizes the discharge of process wastewater, storm water, and miscellaneous clean water discharges. Regulation of all process water and some storm water is required by the above-mentioned regulations. These effluents often have the potential to cause localized problems in the receiving waters. In addition, regardless of impact, these regulations require quality control of all wastewaters by the best available treatment or pollution prevention technology.

This permit does not address most crab shedding operations, because these involve no introduction of pollutants to State waters.

The permit regulates the discharge of fecal coliform, total residual chlorine, and large suspended solids in all

discharges. The fecal coliform limits are necessary because such wastewaters normally exhibit high bacterial levels when discharging to waters protected for harvesting of shellfish. High bacterial levels in shellfish waters result in prohibitions on shellfish harvesting. Total residual chlorine is regulated to comply with a Maryland law prohibiting, because of its extreme toxicity to aquatic life, the discharge of chlorine into State waters. A general requirement for screening large solids was chosen over additional treatment technologies, where possible. This requirement will prevent pollutants that can cause such localized problems in the receiving waters as high turbidity, sediment deposition, oxygen depletion, eutrophication, and aquatic toxicity (from ammonia).

The permit contains discharge limitations for the following seafood processors:

1. Blue Crab, Large Facilities which existed prior to December 1, 1975, and which process blue crab from more than 3000 pounds of raw material on any day;
2. Blue Crab, New Sources which were constructed after December 1, 1975, and which process blue crab;
3. Oyster, Large Facilities which existed prior to July 1, 1986 and which hand-shucked more than 1000 pounds of oysters on any day;
4. Oyster, New Sources which were constructed after July 1, 1986, and which processes oysters; and
6. Other Seafood Discharges.

For large crab processors and for newer and large oyster facilities, total suspended solids and oil and grease are limited based upon the amount of seafood handled to prevent oxygen depletion and excess solids in the receiving waters. For newer crab processing operations, these parameters and BOD₅ are limited to prevent high turbidity, sediment deposition, oxygen depletion, eutrophication, and aquatic toxicity (from ammonia).

In summary, which seafood processing facilities need a discharge permit? Those facilities with discharges of any quantity of process water (usually plant, product, and equipment cleaning water, retort blowdown, boiler blowdown, storage room drainage); facilities with storm water runoff associated with this industrial activity; and facilities with over 10,000 gallons per day, as a monthly average, of any clean water discharges.

A copy of the entire general permit is available to any person who desires to review the details of its terms and conditions. A copy may be obtained from the Industrial Permits Division,

Wastewater Discharge Permit Program, Maryland Department of the Environment, 1800 Washington Blvd., Baltimore Maryland 21230. The phone number is (410) 537-3323.